

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph starting at page 1, line 24, with replacement paragraph as follows:

Conventional rotary trimmers have a blade holding portion for rotatably mounting or holding ~~a circular~~ one or more circular cutting blades and ~~a~~ handle portion for allowing a user to guide the one or more circular cutting blades along a cut pattern. The circular cutting blades are typically mounted in the blade holder such that in an operative state the blades freely rotate during interaction with the material to be cut and in an inoperative state the blades are safely stored.

Please replace the paragraph starting at page 5, line 11, with replacement paragraph as follows:

FIG. 6 is a perspective view of a blade-guard assembly in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

Please replace the paragraph starting at page 5, line 15, with replacement paragraph as follows:

FIG. 7 is a perspective view of a cutting blade in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

Please replace the paragraph bridging pages 7 and 8, with replacement paragraph as follows:

In a preferred aspect of the present invention, shown in FIG. 2, blade carriage 20 can have a handle 22. The operator can use handle 22 to manipulate and/or guide one or more cutting blades 50 when operatively connected to blade carriage 20. Handle 22 can take any of a variety of different forms. For example, as shown in FIG. 2, handle 22 can be an arcuate palm pad. In another aspect of the present invention, shown in FIGS. 4 and 5, handle 22 can be elongated and

have hand grip portion 24 with a neck 26 that connects grip portion 24 to blade carriage 20. In this embodiment, the blade carriage 20 includes a blade mounting surface 25.

Please replace the paragraph starting at page 8, line 5, with replacement paragraph as follows:

Referring to FIGS. ~~3 and 4-5~~, handle 22 may also have an actuator 28 for selectively positioning cutting blades 50 with respect to a cutting surface 29. Actuator 28, like handle 22, can take any of a variety forms. For example, as shown in FIG. 2, actuator 28 can be integral with blade carriage 20 such that a portion thereof can move to position cutting blade 50 with respect to a cutting surface 29. In another aspect of the present invention, actuator 28 can be a squeeze trigger, as shown in FIGS. ~~34-5~~. A locking mechanism 41 can be provided. When actuated, locking mechanism 41 maintains actuator 28 in an actuated position and blade 50 in an extended position such that the operator is not required to maintain pressure on actuator 28. When the locking mechanism 41 is not engaged, actuator 28 is free to rotate to move blade 50 between an extended and retracted position.

Please replace the paragraph bridging pages 10 and 11 as follows:

Cutting blade 50 can have any of a variety of shapes, sizes and/or configurations to provide a variety of different cutting operations. For example, as shown in FIG. 7, cutting blade 50 can be circular and have a cutting edge 51 with a predefined cutting pattern or profile 52 (e.g., a wave profile, a scalloped profile, a volcano profile, a bowtie profile, etc) that is preferably equally extensive with respect to planar side portion 53 of the cutting blade 50. Cutting blade 50 can also have one or more apertures 54 therein for cooperating with a mounting structure associated with blade carriage 20 and/or guard 44 (e.g., mounting post 40). Each cutting blade 50 can also have a hub 55 (shown in FIG. 5) connected thereto or integrally formed therewith. Hub 55 can preferably improve the structural integrity of cutting blades 50 and/or facilitate an effective ~~the~~ connection of cutting blade 50 to blade carriage 20 and/or guard 44. Apertures 54 and/or hub 55 of each cutting blade 50 can be configured to only connect to, and/or effectively operate with, a matching correspondingly configured mounting structure.

Please replace the paragraph starting at page 11, line 17, with replacement paragraph as follows:

Referring to FIGS. 8 through 14, rail 60 can have one or more grooves 61, 62, at least one of which preferably has a biasing element 65 located therein. Biasing element 65 preferably acts on blade carriage 20, when connected to rail 60, to influence the disposition of cutting blade 50 with respect to the cutting surface 29 and to ~~67~~provide provide for a smooth cutting stroke. Biasing element 65, as best shown in FIGS. 8 to 10, preferably takes the form of an elongated beam 64 with one or more flexible members 66 extending therefrom. Flexible members 66, although shown in the form of a pair of integral flat springs, may take any of a variety of different forms.

Please replace the paragraph bridging pages 11 and 12, with replacement paragraph as follows:

Referring more particularly to FIGS. 11 and 12, blade carriage 20 can have a connector 70 for connecting blade carriage 20 to rail 60. Connector 70 can, for example, have a guide rib 72 and a slide 74 (shown in FIGS. 13 and 14 in another aspect of the present invention). As shown best shown in FIG. 9, rail 60 can have a top guide groove 61 and a side guide groove 62. When connected to rail 60, blade carriage 20 can preferably ride or slide along rail 60 via slide 74 that preferably engages side guide groove 62. Guide rib 72, in turn, can preferably interact with biasing member ~~38~~65, which is preferably disposed in top guide groove 61. Accordingly, the operator can position blade carriage 20 to an operable position for cutting by applying outward pressure to handle 22, thereby compressing biasing element 65 in the top guide groove 61, and/or actuating actuator 28 to cause cutting blades 50 to engage the cutting surface 29 and/or the material to be cut, preferably at an angle with respect thereto.

Please replace the paragraph starting at page 14, line 1, with replacement paragraph as follows:

Referring to FIG. 20, cutting board 80 can be interchangeable with respect to rail 60. For example, cutting board 80 can be removable, reversible, or replaced entirely with different measuring devices or surface materials. As shown in FIGS. 22 to 24, cutting board 80 can be foldable for portability and storage. For example, two separate, hinged portions of cutting board 80 can be folded one upon the other to reduce the size of the cutting board.